

# LODI HISTORIAN

VOLUME 8, NUMBER 3

FALL 1997

## EARLY LODI CITY GOVERNMENT

*By Lucy Reller and Ralph Lea*

In 1906 before incorporation, the village of Lodi was administered by five San Joaquin County supervisors. As part of the Elkhorn Township A.E. Perceval was elected Justice of the Peace, and H.B. Coleman as Constable. Our supervisor, C.L. Newton was elected by the 4th district which includes Elkhorn.

The businesses and citizens of Lodi had their own water wells and windmills. The residences had septic tanks while the business area had up

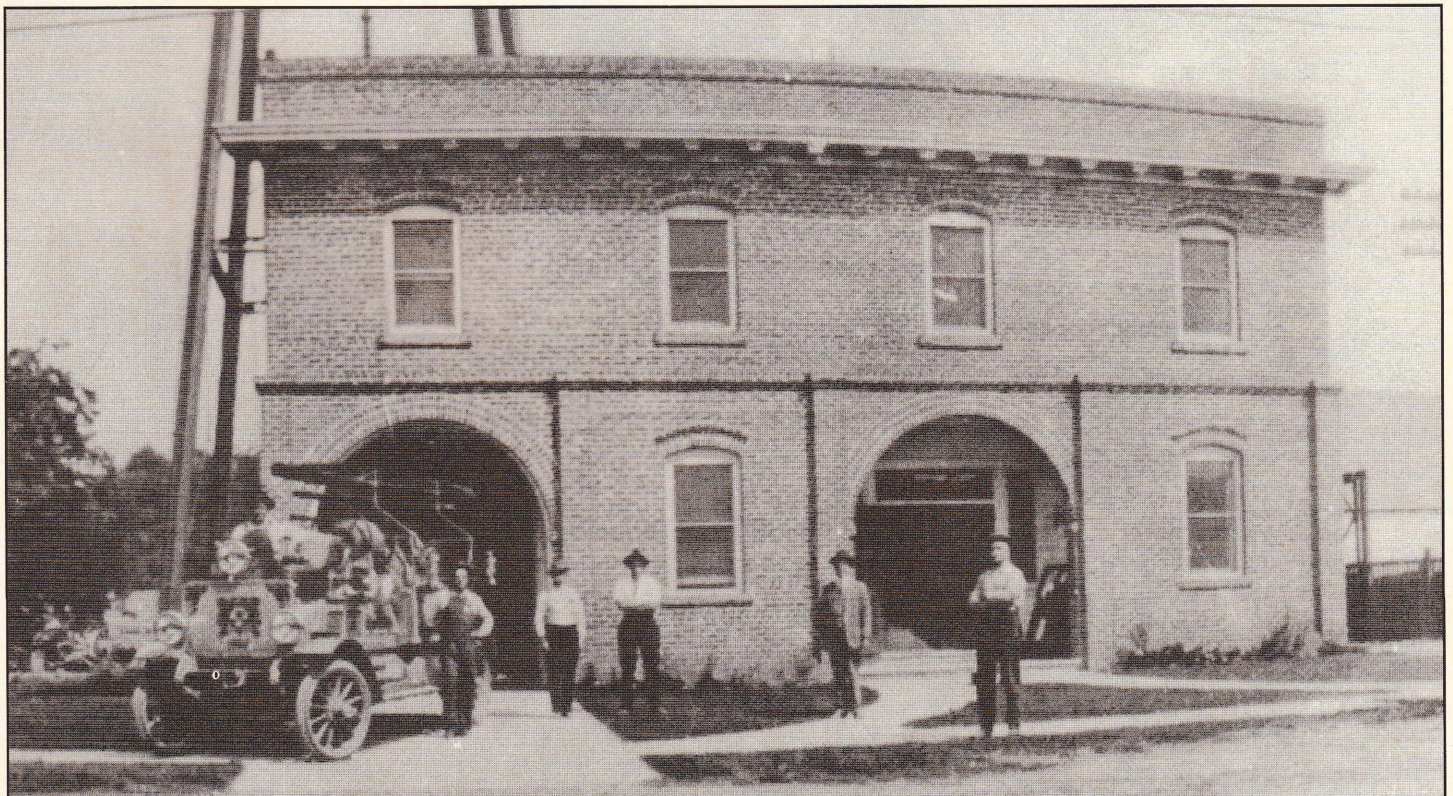
to six underground brick storage areas for sewerage that was pumped and hauled somewhere late at night.

By 1881 the county had built a 21' x 16' wooden jail for use in Lodi. After 1888 the village had a fire cart with a hose for the merchants to use and in 1891, when the Bay City Gas, Water and Electric Company built a 15,000 gallon water tank and mains to supply customers, there was some water for fires.

It was November 15, 1895 in the

evening when Lodi lit up with gas for the first time replacing kerosene lamps. The Springfield gas machine produced gas from crude oil at \$3.00 for 1,000 feet.

The same year, the County Board appointed Herman Schultz, Poundmaster to pick up dogs, pigs, horses and cattle, etc., from the streets of Lodi during the day but at night most people opened their gates to allow animals to eat grass and Lodi looked like a country fair.



▲ City Hall and Fire House, 1913





*Dr. J.M. Blodgett*

they voted 219 to 77 against incorporation.

In July 1905 a meeting was held at the Lodi Free Reading Room to again consider the proposition of incorporation. W.H. Thompson was elected chairman of the evening and there were speakers on both sides.

The opposition of the saloon keepers had a reverse effect and increased the desire of church people and the average citizen to incorporate.

In October 1906, W.A. Spooner, George M. Steele, Max Elwert, W.A. Young and 79 other men petitioned the supervisors for an election which was granted. The election day was November 27th when Lodi voted 266

*Lee Villingier*



By 1896 Cary Bros. had purchased the Bay City Water and Gas Services at the southeast corner of Locust and Main Streets and built a second wooden reservoir 60 feet in the air to hold 60,000 gallons of water.

In 1902 the Cary Bros., Fred and twin Ed, provided electric lights for the first 500 bulbs. They were turned off at midnight. Two years later the service was extended to 24 hours a day.

In 1904 the Lodi newspapers had been running editorials on the subject of incorporation for two years before it came to vote. The saloon owners and some of the other businessmen were afraid of City Government and



*George E. Lawrence,  
First President of Lodi Trustee Board*

The first City Treasurer, W.H. Lorenz, was a cashier of The First National Bank and was remembered as a profound thinker. H.B. Coleman, new City Marshal, was former road supervisor and Elkhorn constable. G.M. Steele was named City Recorder, Dr. F.W. Colman was named Lodi Health Officer and H.E. Welch became the Fire Chief.

In 1906 the first city hall to be used was hardly more than a meeting place for the Board of Trustees and the five employees. Designated as "Public Hall" it was located on the east side of North Sacramento Street between Locust and Lockeford Streets and was owned by San Joaquin County.



*Charles A. Rich*

to 128 to become a sixth class city and at the same time named the first officials. Dentist, Dr. J.M. Blodgett received the most votes of 350 to become a member of the Board of Trustees. Also elected were lawyer, farmer and native son of Lodi, George E. Lawrence; Charles A. Rich, owner and operator of a Lodi grocery store; Leon Villingier, founder of the Lodi Cemetery; and Frank Hale, mortician and the most conservative member of the first board. Also elected was J. Morgan McMahon, called a true-to-life cowboy. Dressed in blue jeans, red shirt and broad-brimmed hat he was quite a contrast to the more soberly trustees.



*Frank O. Hale*



On December 7, 1906 the Board of Trustees had an organizational meeting. George E. Lawrence was elected President of the Board. They found themselves without funds so after setting meeting dates they levied business license fees: Saloon keepers were to pay \$100.00 for three months plus \$12.00 for billiard tables. The other merchants licenses were priced according to three months sales. A fee of \$50.00 each quarter to sell patent medicines where music was used to attract customers (medicine shows).

If you served liquor at meals only, the license was \$10.00, real estate offices \$15.00, hotels \$6.00, but second class only \$2.00. The many store-keepers were called traders and their tax was \$3.00.

At the second meeting held on December 22, 1906 the trustees set a limit of four saloons for Lodi which at that time had a population of 2,000. When the population reached 2,500 they would allow one more saloon. This may not have been enforced.

Ordinance number four provided for the disposal of filth, rubbish, offal and slops. Swill carts were not allowed to leak.

On February 18, 1907 the fifth ordinance was adopted. It set a salary schedule for the five city employees: Marshal - \$70.00 per month; City Clerk - \$40.00 per month; the Recorder and Health Officer - \$10.00 per month. The Treasurer was to be paid 1% of all money received and paid by him.

Animals at large on city streets was unlawful. Other listed misdemeanors were vulgar and abusive language in public, to whistle in a public hall or sing in a saloon, drive faster than eight miles per hour and to leave a horse unhitched.

Ordinance number ten established a curfew where children under 12 years of age are not allowed on the streets after 8:00 p.m. from October to April and 9:00 p.m. during the summer months.

Imprisonment in the county jail and a misdemeanor for prisoners who refuse to labor. This ordinance was

adopted March 25, 1907 and would establish a chain gang if necessary to compel prisoners to work.

All these laws have been repealed or amended at this time.

At the February 18th meeting the first bill was paid. \$6.95 to the City Clerk for supplies and traveling expenses. The Lodi Mill and Lumber Company received \$14.00 for a table, Miss Eirna Carter was paid \$16.70 for typewriting and Cary Bros. \$7.00 for light and water.

It was March before employees received their salaries for January and February.



▲ H.B. Coleman, City Marshal



▲ School Street at Pine, looking north in 1908, before any improvements; Van Buskirk Building on the right.

The 1907 Tokay Carnival received \$674.00 from the city to advertise the big event. In September before and after the carnival, J.W. Dougerty received \$84.50 for sprinkling water, J.K. Nay \$45.00 for street sweeping (horse manure), S.A. Shinn and H. Brannock each received \$10.50 for nightwatching and W. Sibley \$42.87 for board for prisoners.

The end of the first full year the City of Lodi had as income \$4,688. It was necessary to obtain additional money to build the utilities needed. In 1908 the city submitted forty-year bonds of \$50,000 for sewers and a disposal plant for sewage and \$76,000 for a combined water and electric plant. They both passed almost unanimously but litigation held up the sale of the bonds for nearly two years.

It was August 10, 1909 when the

city was able to sell its bonds to the First National Bank of Lodi. They had managed to buy the library site for \$960.00 a year earlier and to pay the annual rent of \$2.00 for the rent of ground for the arch to the Southern Pacific Railroad.

While plans had been drawn and approved for a water and electric supply system, it was deemed advisable to negotiate for the purchase of the existing plant. Cary Bros. was asking \$55,000 but in February, 1910 they finally agreed to sell for \$35,000. There was some hard feelings as the city hired John Henning, an employee of Cary Bros. as their new Utilities Supervisor. New water pumps were installed and a 100,000 gallon steel tank replaced the old wooden tank. Electric energy was purchased from a Sacramento hydro-electric company and electric rates were reduced 40%.





▲ Everyone had an awning before 1907; 00 block of N. Sacramento Street looking south.

and Electric Company. New poles and wire were purchased for the nine electric workers. Operators for the sewer plant and electrical operations were hired plus 23 street laborers. Eight regular city employees were on salary.

With all this construction the city also paid John Bauer, leader of the Tokay Band, \$40.00 for four park concerts.

By March of 1911, the city was able to transfer \$6,000 to two municipal funds from profit of the water and light sales.

The water and light plant included lots I and II of block 29, the southeast corner of Locust and Main Streets. The city would take over July 1, 1910. In the meantime the Cary Bros. were paid an additional \$423.00 for material and labor to improve the electric plant.

On April 4, 1910 the city purchased 7.2 acres south of Kettleman Lane and east of the Woodbridge Irrigation District canal for a septic tank site for \$1,400.

July 1, 1910 the five trustees each received \$40.00 as salary for the previous three months. This was



Parking of rigs on the Southern Pacific lot on Sacramento Street at Pine Street; ▲ 4th of July, after 1907.



▲ Main Street and Pine Street, north, 1909. Cary Bros. water tank on left; note fire hydrant on right.

increased to \$60.00 at the end of the next quarter.

The contracts for the sewer plant and outfall line plus the new water tank were awarded and completed by the end of the year. The engineer, H.H. Henderson also had a contract for a percentage of money spent. With so much construction in progress the city

purchased their own sprinkling wagon from Studebaker Bros. for \$478.50.

The last few months of 1910 saw the city concentrating on improving and extending cast iron water pipes.

Beginning in January, 1911 the city changed from buying electric power from the American River Electrical Company to the Western States Gas

On October 12, 1911 the Board of Trustees asked their supervisor Newton to set aside one cell in the county jail in Lodi for city use. Constable Floyd replied, "that if the Lodi Trustees don't like their quarters in the county jail building they can move out at any time they see fit." The so-called "city hall" was in reality a branch of the county jail upon which the city had no claim.

The fact was that the city had been renting quarters from the county that were inadequate for a city of 3,000 citizens. With a new fire department, engineers and added staff there was a greater demand for water, sewer and electric service.

January 4, 1912 the firemen were asking for an auto truck in place of the horses and an ordinance for exits and fire escapes. Also on this date, the plans for the new city hall on site of the old water tank were unveiled. The



brick walls on the first floor to be nine inches thick and six inches thick on the second floor. The north side of the lower floor is to be a fire apparatus room for hook and ladder and hose wagons. The principal part of the upper floor is for the city officials and council room on the south. The north upper section is sleeping quarters for firemen.

On the lower floor of the square building were offices for the city clerk, the city engineer, the superintendent of public utilities and the fire department. The City Board of Trustees met upstairs. This was first used as a public building in August, 1912.

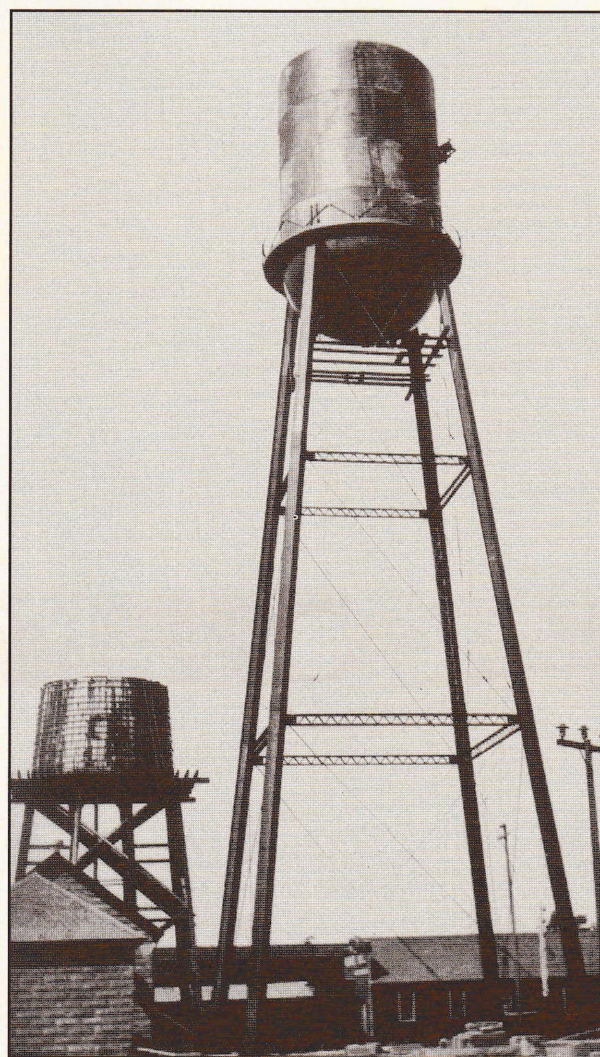
C.A. Black had replaced L. Villingier as a member of the Board of Trustees. G.E. Lawrence was still President of the Board; J.M. McMahon, City



▲ Main Street, looking north from Oak Street, 1910. T.H. Peppers fruit shed on left, Cosmopolitan Hotel on right, city water tank in rear.



▲ Carey Bros. Water Works on Locust and Main Streets.  
John A. Henning, Superintendent of Public Utilities, 1910. ►



▲ 1910. The new 100,000 gallon water tank of the City of Lodi about to replace the wooden tank of the Carey Bros. at Locust and Main Streets, looking west with the jail on left. Dona Bohnet Photo

Clerk and Assessor; H.B. Coleman, City Marshal and Tax Collector; W.H. Lorenz, City Treasurer; F.W. Coleman, Health Officer; E.E. Breitenbucher, Recorder; E.H. Stark, Fire Chief and John A. Henning, Superintendent of Public Utilities.

The population had increased from 2,000 in 1906 to 3,000 for 1912. There were 687 water consumers and 570 light consumers.

Things were happening very fast in Lodi in 1912. In January the downtown street work began with the moving of fire hydrants for the new sidewalk and pavement. The electric railroad tracks on Sacramento Street are to be

moved to the center of the street (still there from Lodi Avenue to Lockeford Street).

The water mains were all tied to the new steel 100,000 gallon water tower so that the old wooden tank could be removed for the new municipal building.

The first Electrolier (street light) to be installed in downtown Lodi was lighted on May 19, 1912 in front of Mrs. Rutledge's home





▲ Bank of Lodi circa 1910; 00 block of North Sacramento Street, looking north from Pine Street.

on the southwest corner of Locust and Sacramento Streets.

The Natural Gas Company had given up trying to find gas wells and planned to manufacture gas from crude oil instead of coal. Two gas tanks and generators were installed south of Tokay Street and west of the Southern Pacific railroad.

The telephone company manager, W.H. Faust, reported that Lodi had 526 subscribers. A small problem evolved as the Odd Fellows building sidewalk is a foot higher than the top of the curb. (It was that way for years, making it impossible to open a car door.)

City trustee Frank Hale was asked to designate a location for the Women's Christian Temperance Union drinking fountain. The women wanted it on Sacramento Street so there would be something other than alcohol to drink. Frank favored a spot in front of the First National Bank located half a block away.

March 14, 1912 a Lodi ordinance sounds the death knell for the

Catawba Club that had 450 members, mostly boys, who would booze there when the saloons are closed. Manager, C.W. Walden is arrested.

June 1, 1912 the city was paving School Street between Oak and Elm Streets after removing the oak trees. A four-inch concrete base with one and one-half inch wearing surface. On June 25, 1912 the city announced they did not have money for new streets. In July the city started paving Pine Street between School and Church and School Street between Oak and Lockeford Streets, but the cost of \$5.25 per running foot was to be paid by the property owners.

There was very little public comment on the new "Municipal Building" constructed on Main Street between Elm and Locust Streets for the bargain price of \$3,998. C.I. Rice was the contractor for the two story brick building at 114 N. Main Street.

The Lodi Fire Department was about to move into the building and it was time to celebrate. Many people turned out for the July 4, 1912 holiday.

At 1:00 p.m. on Main Street north of Pine, there was a water fight between six chosen firemen of the Alert and of the Wide Awake Lodi fire companies. Alert Company – Bert Wakefield, Dick McLure, Herman Dutschke, Paul Koch, Ira Wilkinson and A.P. Wakefield. Wide Awake Company – Chas. Hamilton, "Squeak" Corson, Capt. James Prentice, Albert Dutschke, Henry Frey and D.S. Barnes. They line up at equal distance and at the tap of a bell had to connect hoses and nozzle to a fire plug. The water was turned on and all firemen and most of the spectators were soaked. After ten minutes the Wide Awake Company was declared the winner.

Electroliers with large white globes and painted dark green by J.L. Pickering were lit the evening of the 4th of July. Many oohs and aahs and compliments for the city. When they were asked how the city could afford it they answered the businessmen and property owners paid for lights and the city furnished the current.

The Women's Christian Temper-





1912, just before paving; north side of Pine Street (School to Sacramento Streets). ▲

ance Union and First Methodist Church petitioned trustees to prohibit "Rag" dances. All the trustees were of the opinion that the dances such as carried on the night of the 4th were immoral and should be prevented, but a state law was already on the books. The Clerk of the Trustees, C.A. Rich,

was instructed to write other municipalities as to how they were handling such matters.

The new municipal building was completed the first part of July, 1912. \$1.50 was paid to clean the hall and on August 5th \$2.00 was paid for janitor service and \$3.00 to wash all the

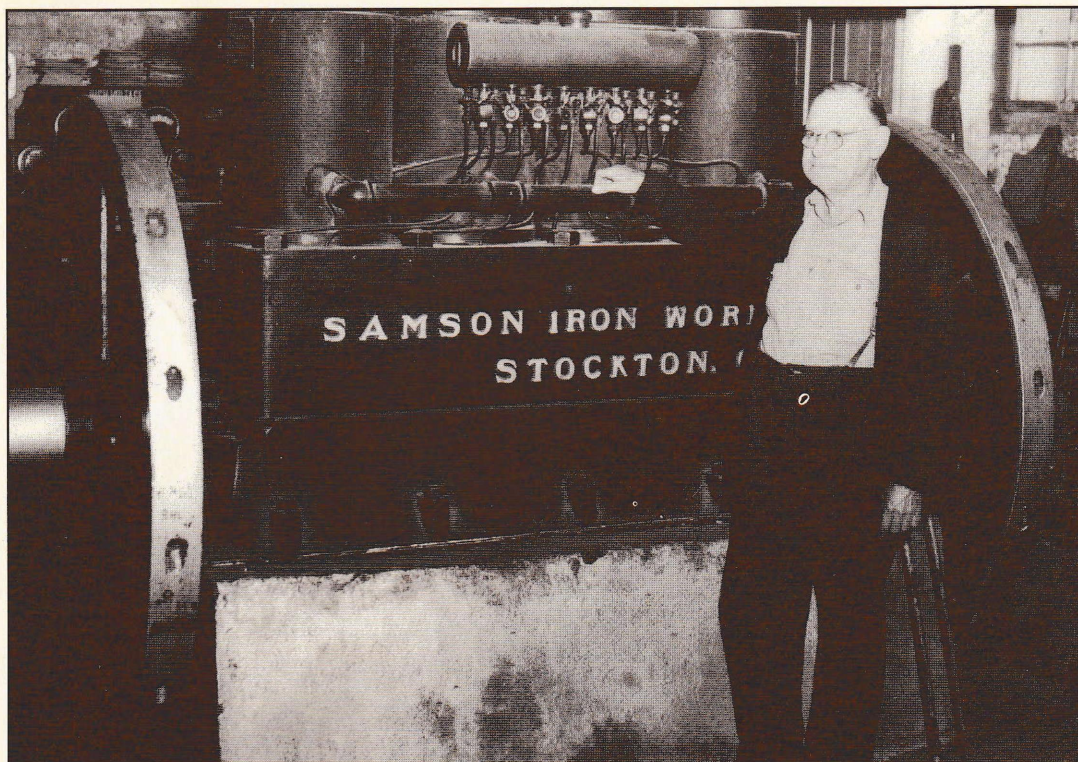
windows in the City Hall.

At the same time T.H. Myers was listed as a Special Police (later called Deputy Marshal) and 14 marshal badges were purchased for \$1.00 each. The city purchased a transit, level and tripod and began paving some of the downtown streets.



▲ Sacramento Street between Oak and Pine Streets – the heart of Lodi's real estate business.





▲ George Walker, adopted son of Laura DeForce Gordon, worked for Cary Bros. until 1910. He then became the Water and Electric Operator for the City of Lodi.

The furniture for the new City Hall was purchased from various local merchants: Newfield & Sons - \$196.38; Friedberger & Kaiser - \$181.50; and Hale and Rich - \$3.50. Pickering

painted the hall for \$124.25.

The Marshal did not occupy any room in the city building but instead rented an office from Mrs. Anna Solars for \$8.00 a month.

L.F. Barzollotti began surveying for the city in November. The city paid Mr. Lues \$17.00 for house numbering.

Ordinance #64 was passed on November 19, 1912. Traffic is now regulated on the streets of Lodi. All bicycles, motorcycles, automobiles and all vehicles except baby carriages and children's play wagons are to keep to the right of all streets in all cases where practical by drawing an imaginary line. Do not park for over one hour at one place, have a bell or horn that is not an annoying sound. Do not travel in the wake of another vehicle (not too close). Supply your own catch basin if your auto is in the habit of leaking oil or gasoline. Drivers must be 18 years of age or 16 with permit. At this time there were 87,000 vehicles registered in California.

In April, 1913 the city purchased a \$1,131 fire alarm system that never did work.

John Bauer worked as Assistant City

Clerk and in August the city paid the Lodi Soda Works \$2.50 for hauling hose for the fire department and purchased a water pump from Byron Jackson for \$35.00.

In September, 1913 the city received the first fire truck, a Seagrave Auto Chemical. At \$5,950 plus \$320.00 freight it cost more than the city hall. The city started buying gasoline from the Sierra Auto Company.

The transformer building of 1908 was now being converted to a jail with \$168.00 worth of equipment from an iron works, probably for windows and doors.

It was 1914 before the Perrin Bros. completed the jail construction and Joe Dotson plastered the walls. In April, Mr. Gray was paid \$1.00 for janitor work at the jail.

In May, 1914 Clark Snyder was paid \$50.00 for a dumping ground and in September druggist Otto Weibe was paid \$5.60 for bicarbonate soda.

## THE LODI HISTORIAN

is a quarterly publication of the Lodi Historical Society  
P.O. Box 264, Lodi, CA 95241-0264

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